

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed on October 13, 2006. The Office Action requires Applicants to restrict their patent application to 22 separate alleged groups of invention. Applicants respectfully submit that this restriction requirement is improper. There are only 32 claims pending but 22 alleged groups of invention! This, in and of itself, appears to render the restriction improper. The restriction, it is respectfully submitted, is an attempt to severely limit the present patent application.

In fact, not only are 22 separate groups set forth, for a 32 claim application, a number of the groups include the same claims. See, for example, Groups I-V, Groups VIII-XIII, and Groups XV-XX, where the identical claims are set forth.

The Patent Office's attempted piecemeal examination of the instant patent application, segregating 32 claims into at least 22 separate inventions, not only is unduly limiting, but will only create undue burden and work for not only the Applicant, but the Patent Office. Is the Patent Office suggesting that 22 separate patent applications must be filed? Besides the tremendous cost to Applicants, such an approach to the examination of patent applications will substantially increase the Patent Office's already burgeoning workload. This not only does not appear to comport with the MPEP, but is also contrary to the recent enunciated goals of the Patent Office.

Applicants traverse this restriction and respectfully request that the Patent Office withdraw this restriction requirement or issue a more reasonable restriction requirement. If the Patent Office does not, Applicants reserve the right to petition to have the restriction withdrawn.

Applicants elect, with traverse, Group II.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-1818.

Respectfully submitted,

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